THE

COMMUNICATION GAP

Why more information is making human connection more valuable

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Better conversations. Stronger connections. Greater impact.

Dedication

To my **Father Morris**: You taught me that thoughts and words are living things. I saw you deliver that message to thousands of people. **Now I get it.** It's an honour to carry and continue your legacy in this next paradigm.
One door closes, another door opens.

To my Mother **Helena**: I have many happy memories of you reading to me, making stories come alive. You embodied stories with energy, brilliance and presence, providing me with my earliest experiences of how magical stories truly are. And for your influence, energy and support, I will always be grateful.

Pete: Your gift for storytelling through music is an honour to witness. Thank you for all of your support, love and energy - especially as I've ventured down so many rabbit warrens over the years, chasing my next greatest idea. I'm grateful to you for walking beside me, keeping me accountable and loving me through the madness. And you'll be happy to know that I think I've landed.

Nicole: My beautiful sister cousin. Thank you for being my ongoing case study, my idea tester and my BIGGEST cheerleader. Your heart is the size of the sun, you are a constant joy in my life, and I'm grateful to know you.

Miss Leah: Thank you for being open to so many of my crazy ideas, open to learning and listening to my latest raves about stories, identity and expression. Proud of you and all that you are becoming.

Julia: There's been a lot of years and a lot of stories. Thank you for your continued encouragement and pushing me into places where I get to shine - especially when my confidence was at its lowest. I have learned so much through those experiences and it's true: when you feel the fear and do it anyway, you are unstoppable. Gratitude.

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WELCOME

Thank you for downloading The Communication Gap.

I'm genuinely glad you're here.

I've written this as a conversation starter rather than another document that tells people they need to 'communicate better'. If you work in learning and development, leadership, people and culture, sales, or anywhere that depends on humans understanding other humans, I hope it gives you useful language for something you may already be noticing.

Please use it. Write in it. Circle the bits that make you think. Disagree with me. Take a question into your next team meeting. Share a page with somebody who needs to see it. The value of an idea like this is not in reading it quietly and filing it away. It is in the conversations it starts.

The thinking in these pages has grown out of my years working with people in rooms, on stages, on camera and inside organisations, and from research that gave me a deeper understanding of communication as a relational act. But this book is not intended to stay academic. I want it to be useful.

As you read, I'd love you to notice where the communication gap shows up around you. Where are people moving information brilliantly but missing each other? Where has efficiency replaced curiosity? Where could one better conversation change what happens next?

Thank you for spending some time with my work. I hope it gives you something worth talking about.

A NOTE BEFORE WE START

We have never had more ways to communicate.

We can message, email, post, prompt, present, record, share and respond faster than at any point in human history. We can write something, rewrite it, polish it and have AI help us make it sound better before another human being ever sees it.

And yet, everywhere I go, I keep hearing the same concerns. People are struggling to speak up. Leaders are finding it harder to have meaningful conversations. Sales teams are relying heavily on information but struggling to create trust. Younger employees are being described as reluctant to pick up the phone. Workplaces are more connected digitally, while many people feel less connected personally.

Have we created a communication gap?

Not because we have stopped communicating. We communicate constantly. But perhaps we have become so focused on transmitting information that we have lost sight of what communication is actually for.

Because communication is about far more than getting information from one person to another. It is about creating understanding, trust and meaning. It is about creating something between us. And in an age of infinite information, I believe that ability is becoming more valuable, not less.

This question has become increasingly important to me because communication has been the thread running through my entire career. I have worked in live television, presenting, producing, speaking, training and coaching, and over the years I have become increasingly interested in not just what makes people speak well, but what makes communication actually connect.

In 2023, I started my Masters journey with Unitec here in Auckland. I undertook a Master of Creative Practice, exploring my own practice as a speaker. That curiosity became the basis of my research, where I explored the relational worldview of Te Ao Māori and the role it can play in creating dynamic co-presence between a speaker and an audience.

What I discovered changed the way I think about communication completely. The more I researched it, the clearer something became:

Communication is not something we deliver to people. It is something we create with them.

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CHAPTER 1

Have We Forgotten How to Talk?

I have been at a lot of conferences and events lately, and I keep hearing versions of the same conversation.

Sometimes it starts with AI. Sometimes it starts with culture. Sometimes somebody says their team has become too dependent on email, or that people do not want to pick up the phone anymore. A sales leader tells me their people know the product but struggle to have a real conversation. A manager says feedback is getting harder. Someone else talks about confidence, presentation skills or why younger staff seem more comfortable behind a screen than in a room.

The topics change, but the feeling underneath them is remarkably similar.

We have never had more ways to communicate. So why do so many of us feel less confident actually talking to each other?

We can send a message across the planet in seconds. We can schedule a meeting without speaking to anybody, present to people we have never physically met, write a polished proposal with AI, turn a conversation into a transcript and a transcript into a summary before we have even had time to think about what happened in the room.

That is extraordinary. I am not anti-technology. Quite the opposite. I use AI every day and I am endlessly interested in what it can help us build, create and understand.

But every new communication tool also raises an old human question: did we actually connect?

LinkedIn's 2026 Skills on the Rise research is interesting here. As technology becomes more embedded in everyday work, it points to executive and stakeholder communication, public speaking, cross-functional collaboration and other people skills as increasingly important. The World Economic Forum tells a similar story. Leadership and social influence, empathy and active listening, and curiosity and lifelong learning all sit among the core skills employers say matter for the future of work.

I do not think that is a coincidence.

The more capable our tools become at moving information, the more visible the genuinely human parts of communication become. Being able to listen. Read a room. Explain why something matters. Tell a story. Ask a useful question. Notice when somebody has misunderstood you. Sit in an uncomfortable conversation without immediately escaping into a screen.

Those things were always important. They are becoming harder to ignore.

So when I talk about the communication gap, I am not suggesting people have stopped communicating. We communicate constantly. I am suggesting that we may have become so focused on the speed and quantity of communication that we have stopped paying enough attention to the quality of what happens between people.

A question worth asking

In your organisation, what percentage of communication is designed to move information, and what percentage is intentionally designed to create understanding, trust or connection?



"Great news, everyone. We're finally having the open conversation... in the team chat."

CHAPTER 2

The Difference Between Information and Communication

One of the things I see again and again in my work is that people assume their communication problem is confidence.

Sometimes it is. But quite often, when we start pulling the problem apart, confidence is not where it began. The person is nervous because the thinking is still fuzzy. They have a lot of information, but they have not decided what really matters. They are trying to say everything, which usually means the audience has to work out the point for themselves.

That is why one of my favourite questions is incredibly simple: what are you actually trying to communicate?

Not what are you trying to say. What are you trying to create in the other person?

Do you want them to understand? Decide? Trust you? Feel reassured? Become curious? Take action? Change their mind? Feel seen? Buy something? Have a difficult conversation differently tomorrow?

Once we ask that question, communication starts becoming relational rather than performative.

Information is what I send. Communication is what we create between us.

This distinction matters in presentations. It matters in leadership. It matters in a marriage. It matters in sales. It matters online.

An email can contain every relevant fact and still leave somebody confused. A manager can deliver a perfectly accurate message and still create fear. A salesperson can explain every feature and never answer the thing the customer is actually wondering. A LinkedIn post can be technically excellent and completely forgettable.

We often judge communication by whether we delivered it. I think we need to judge it by whether it landed.

That is why clarity, confidence and impact have become such useful anchors in my work. Clarity is knowing what I mean. Confidence is being willing and able to express it. Impact is paying attention to what happens when it meets another person.

Impact is where communication stops being a solo activity.

And perhaps that is one of the habits we have lost. We have become very good at producing messages. We are less practised at staying around long enough to discover what those messages created.

Try this in your next meeting

Before you send the slide deck or open the agenda, finish this sentence: “By the end of this conversation, I want us to understand, feel or decide…” If you cannot finish the sentence clearly, you probably need more thinking before you need more communication.



"To keep this conversation personal,
I've sent you an email."

CHAPTER 3

Stories Make Information Relational

This is the sentence that has been sitting in my head for a while now: stories make information relational.

The more I think about it, the more I think it explains why so much business communication feels harder than it needs to.

We have become very informational in the way we deliver ideas. We fill slides. We add bullet points. We send documents. We explain processes. We summarise. We optimise. And then we wonder why people do not remember what we said.

A story does something different. It gives information a person, a place, a consequence, an emotion, a before and an after. It lets the listener locate themselves in the meaning instead of only receiving the facts.

I often demonstrate this live using Hairy Maclary. Most New Zealanders know the experience of that story: the rhythm, repetition, characters, anticipation and sound. You are not just given information about a dog going somewhere. You participate in it.

Then imagine I deliver the same basic sequence like a corporate briefing. A domestic canine exited a residential property, encountered a series of other dogs, proceeded through a defined route and experienced an adverse encounter with a cat.

Technically, we still have information. But the experience has disappeared.

And that is the point.

The information may be similar. The relationship to the information is completely different.

Why do stories work so well in leadership, sales and learning? Not because they are decorative. Not because every presentation needs a dramatic childhood anecdote. They work because they provide context and make meaning easier to construct.

If I tell you that a new process will save twenty minutes, you have data. If I tell you about Sarah, who used to finish work at 6.30 every Thursday because of a process everyone had accepted as normal, and what changed when the team questioned it, you suddenly understand the consequence of those twenty minutes.

The information has become relational.

This is one of the strongest threads connecting my professional work to my Masters research. In Te Ara o Te Harakeke, I explored storytelling as more than a delivery technique. I was interested in the way story creates connection. In the research, personal and collective stories became part of a wider relational exchange between speaker and audience. The presentation was not something I did at people. It was something we made sense of together.

That changes how I think about story in business. A useful story is not there to show how interesting the speaker is. It helps the listener find themselves in the idea.

Sales becomes a good example. Information tells me what your service includes. Story helps me understand why it matters. Information tells me how many years you have been operating. Story shows me what

you notice that somebody with less experience might miss. Information describes the transformation. Story lets me imagine myself inside it.

This is why I believe storytelling is not separate from communication. It is one of the ways we turn information into relationship.

The relational test

Take one piece of information you regularly communicate at work. Ask: Who is affected by this? What changes because of it? What is the human moment inside it? That is often where the story begins.



"At some point, I assume we'll meet the customer hidden somewhere in slide forty-two."

CHAPTER 4

How People Actually Receive Us

When I started teaching storytelling and communication, I became fascinated by the different ways people take in an idea. Some people want to see it. Some want to hear the logic. Some want an example. Some need to talk it through. Some want to try it before they really trust it.

One of the best-known ways of describing those differences is the VAK model: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. It is useful language for thinking about the channels through which information can be experienced. We can see an idea through diagrams, words or demonstration. We can hear it through explanation, discussion, rhythm and tone. We can experience it through movement, rehearsal, role-play or doing the thing itself.

Where I am careful is turning those channels into fixed identities. The research has repeatedly challenged the idea that we can diagnose someone as a ‘visual learner’, an ‘auditory learner’ or a ‘kinaesthetic learner’ and improve their learning by matching all teaching to that preferred mode. A major review by Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer and Bjork found no adequate evidence base for that matching approach, and later systematic reviews have found that belief in learning styles remains widespread despite the lack of evidence that matching instruction to a labelled style improves learning.

For me, the useful lesson is not that each person belongs in one box. It is that communication becomes richer when we give people more than one way into an idea.

There is another piece of learning science that helps here. However information arrives, it still has to move through a learning process: we need to notice and encode it, retain and connect it to what we already know, and later retrieve or apply it when we need it. In everyday language: it has to get in, stick, and come back out when it matters.

That is why variety can be so powerful. A visual can help attention and structure. A spoken story can add emotion, rhythm and context. Discussion can force us to organise an idea in our own words. Practice and role-play can move knowledge into application. The value is in giving the brain multiple meaningful encounters with the idea, not in deciding that one person should only ever receive information in one preferred format.

It might let people see an idea, hear a story, discuss it, connect it to something they already know, try it, reflect on it and then explain it in their own words. The point is not to diagnose everyone in the room. The point is to stop assuming that one stream of words will automatically become understanding.

Good communication gives people more than one doorway into the idea.

This is another reason informational delivery can struggle. It often places the full burden on the listener. Here are the facts. Here are the slides. Here is the policy. Here is the update. Now please absorb it, care about it and change your behaviour.

Human beings are more complicated than that.

We bring prior experiences, expectations, emotions, cultural contexts and our own internal stories into every conversation. The meaning I intend is not necessarily the meaning you receive.

Which is why context matters so much.

If somebody reacts strongly to a sentence I thought was harmless, I can defend my intention. Or I can get curious about what happened between my intention and their interpretation.

That gap is communication territory.

For L&D teams, there is a big opportunity here. Instead of asking only, 'What information do people need to know?', we can also ask, 'What experience will help them make meaning from it?'

That shift sounds small, but it changes the design of learning. It changes the role of story, discussion, reflection, facilitation and practice. It also changes what we measure. Completion is not the same as connection, and information recall is not the same as confident application.

For L&D teams

When designing learning, try building around four questions: What do they need to know? Why should they care? Where will they practise? With whom will they make meaning?



"We've made a real commitment to open communication.
We just prefer it silent."

CHAPTER 5

Communication Is Relational

This is where my Masters research sits at the heart of this work.

My research project was called Te Ara o Te Harakeke, The Pathway of the Flax. I asked how the relational worldview of te ao Māori (the Māori worldview) could contribute to dynamic co-presence in keynote speaking.

At first glance, that might sound like a very specific academic question about speaking on stage. For me, it became something much bigger.

I used the harakeke (flax) as a metaphor because a kete (woven basket) is created by weaving strands together. In my speaking practice, those strands included whakapapa (genealogy, identity and connection to where we come from), manaakitanga (care, generosity and respect), whanaungatanga (relationships, kinship and belonging), rangatiratanga (leadership, self-determination and integrity), kotahitanga (unity and collective strength), kaitiakitanga (guardianship and responsibility), and wairuatanga (spiritual connection and a sense of something greater). They shaped how I thought about the people in the room, the knowledge I carried, the responsibility I had for it and the relationship being created while I spoke.

The harakeke metaphor already carries deep relational meaning in te ao Māori. The rito (the young shoot at the centre) is understood as the child, protected by the awhi rito (the supporting parent leaves), while the outer leaves represent wider whānau (family and extended family) and tūpuna (ancestors). A pā harakeke (a grove of harakeke) can

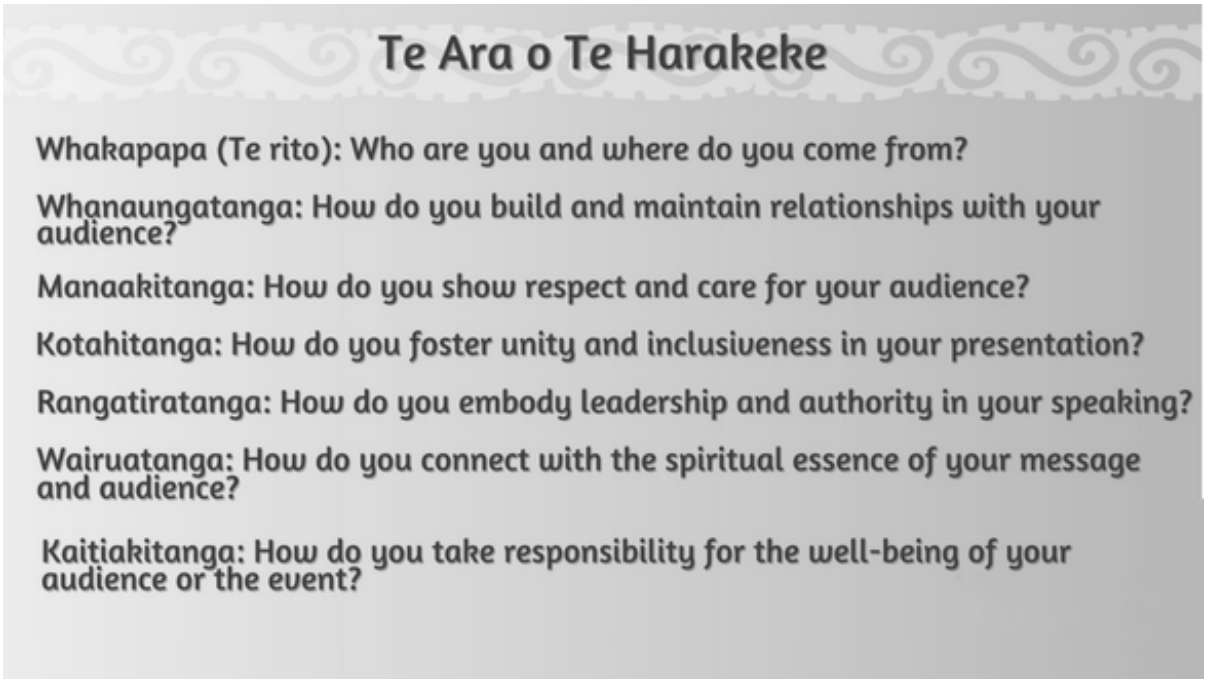
represent living whakapapa: generations growing together, protected, supported and connected.

Harakeke has also been used across Aotearoa to explore whānau, growth, protection and intergenerational relationships because the plant itself offers such a powerful picture of relational support. Te Whāriki, our early childhood curriculum, uses the metaphor of a woven whāriki (mat), where principles and strands are interwoven and relationships, family and community are foundational. The images are different, but the idea is consistent: growth happens through connection and support.

Te Ara o Te Harakeke: the research model



The values at the heart of Te Ara o Te Harakeke.



The reflective questions I developed to bring the model into speaking practice.

The more I researched, the less interested I became in the idea of a speaker whose job was merely to 'deliver content'.

Delivery sounds one-directional. Relational communication is alive. It responds. It notices. It is shaped by the people present.

Communication is not just what travels from one person to another. It is what becomes possible between them.

One of the things I observed in my own practice was what happened when I intentionally focused on whanaungatanga, on relationship and connection. I became more conscious of tone, body language, language choices and whether people felt acknowledged. In the feedback I gathered as part of the research, 92% of participants reported a strong sense of connection.

What mattered to me was not the percentage on its own. It was the language people used. They talked about feeling seen. They talked about leaning in. They talked about feeling part of something rather than sitting in an audience passively receiving information.

That is what I mean by co-presence.

And although the Masters was situated in keynote speaking, I do not think co-presence belongs only on a stage. It exists in a one-to-one conversation. In a sales meeting. In a leadership conversation. Around the dinner table. In the moment somebody puts down their phone and really listens.

Te ao Māori gave me language and a worldview for something I had experienced throughout my life as a speaker: communication carries responsibility.

If knowledge is a taonga (treasure), then how I share it matters. If the people in front of me matter, then how they experience the conversation matters. If relationship matters, then being technically correct is not enough.

That is a very different starting point from 'How do I get my message across?'

It asks a better question: 'What are we creating here together?'

A different communication question

Instead of asking "How do I get my point across?", try asking "What needs to happen between us for this conversation to be useful?"



"To keep this conversation personal,
I've sent you an email."

CHAPTER 6

The Gap at Work, at Home and in Sales

One reason I think The Communication Gap matters is that it does not stay politely inside the training room.

The same habits follow us everywhere.

At work, we can become so task-focused that conversation becomes purely operational. What is due? Who owns it? What is the deadline? What is the status? Those questions are necessary, but if they become the whole relationship, people can work beside each other for years without really understanding what drives one another.

At home, the pattern can look strangely similar. Who is picking up the groceries? What time are you home? Did you pay that bill? What are we doing Saturday? Again, useful information. But relationship needs more than logistics.

And in sales, information can take over completely. We explain the product, the process, the deliverables, the options and the price, then wonder why the other person does not feel a reason to move.

What is missing in all three places is often the same thing: curiosity.

Why does this matter to you? What is making this hard? What would good look like? What are you worried might happen? What do you wish people understood? What changed? Why now?

Curiosity is one of the quickest ways to move a conversation from transactional to relational.

I think L&D has an important role here because we can design opportunities for people to practise conversation before a crisis forces them to.

Not another hour of slides about having courageous conversations. An actual courageous conversation, facilitated well, where people can experience what happens when they slow down, listen, ask a better question and stay curious for another thirty seconds.

The same applies to sales training. Product knowledge matters. But if we only train people to know what to say, we miss half the job. The salesperson also needs to know how to discover what matters to the person in front of them.

This is where story and listening meet. A good salesperson hears the customer's story before deciding which information belongs in the conversation. A good leader does the same. A good facilitator does the same.

Communication becomes relevant because it is responsive.

And at home? Sometimes the most useful communication skill is not a technique at all. It is putting down the phone and asking a question you do not already know the answer to.

A simple practice

Ask one person this week a question that is not about what they are doing, but why it matters to them. Then do not improve, fix or redirect their answer. Just stay interested.



"For the difficult conversation exercise, please submit your feelings through the portal."

CHAPTER 7

Who Are We When We Communicate Online?

There is another version of the communication gap I am becoming increasingly interested in, and that is the gap between who we are and how we sound online.

AI has made it possible for almost anybody to produce clean, competent content quickly. That is useful. It is also creating an extraordinary amount of sameness.

You can feel it when you scroll. Perfectly structured posts. Perfectly reasonable advice. Perfectly polished sentences that could have been written by almost anybody.

And the question I keep coming back to is: where are you in it?

I do not mean we should reject AI and go back to doing everything the slow way. I certainly will not. I mean that as our tools become better at producing language, we need to become more intentional about the parts of our communication that are actually ours.

Our point of view. Our stories. Our humour. Our contradictions. Our experience. The phrases we naturally use. The things we notice because of the life we have lived.

When everyone has access to the same tools, recognisable humanity becomes part of the advantage.

This matters for brands as much as individuals. If your organisation's online communication sounds polished but nobody can tell what you care about, that is not a copywriting problem. It may be a clarity problem.

What do you believe? What do you refuse to do? What are you curious about? What stories shaped the way your organisation works? What language do your customers actually use? What do your people know because they have lived it rather than read it?

AI can help articulate those things. It cannot decide them for you.

This is why I think voice is becoming a serious business capability. Not ‘voice’ as in sounding charismatic. Voice as in being able to recognise what you think, express it in language that feels like you and stand behind it when another human being asks a question.

That last part matters. If your public voice cannot survive a conversation, it was probably never really yours.

A human voice audit

Take your last five public posts, emails or thought-leadership pieces. Cover your name. Would somebody who knows you recognise the author? If not, what is missing: point of view, story, language, specificity or courage?



"Your thought leadership is excellent. Now we just need to figure out what you actually think."

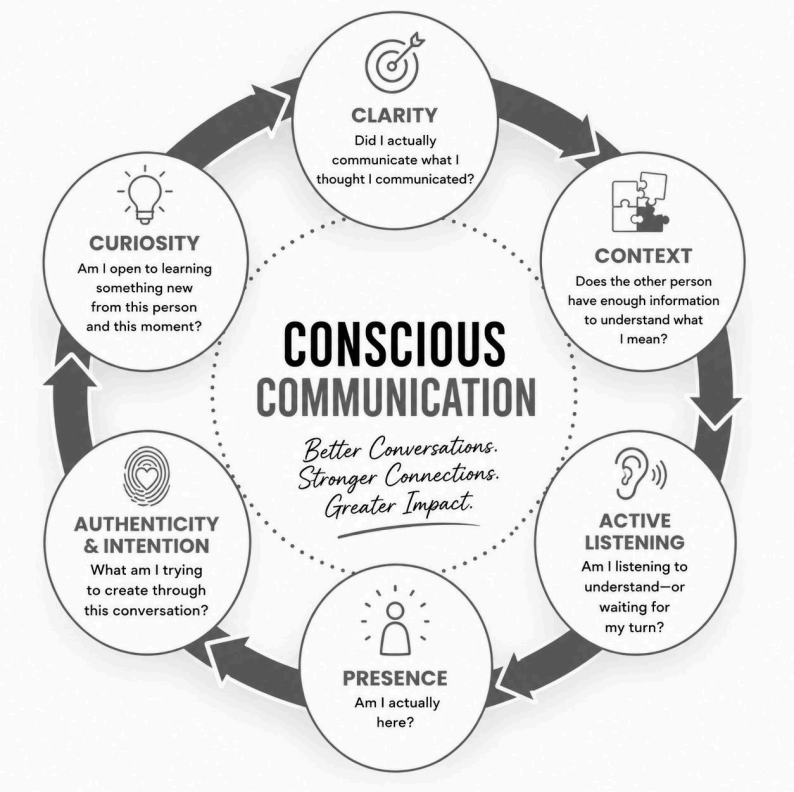
CHAPTER 8

Conscious Communication

The Communication Gap is not solved by telling people to communicate better. Most people are already doing the best they can with the habits they have.

What helps is giving people a way to notice what is happening while they communicate.

That is the purpose of my Conscious Communication model. I do not see it as a rigid six-step process where every conversation must begin at the top and obediently move around the circle. I see it as six questions we can return to whenever communication gets fuzzy, tense, performative or disconnected.



The Conscious Communication model. © Monique Bradley

Clarity

Did I actually communicate what I thought I communicated? This sounds almost ridiculous until you notice how often we assume the other person has access to the thinking that happened inside our head before we spoke. Clarity requires us to separate what we know from what we actually said.

Context

Does the other person have enough information to understand what I mean? Context is one of the first casualties of fast communication. We jump into the middle because we know the backstory. They do not. Then we interpret their confusion as resistance.

Active listening

Am I listening to understand, or waiting for my turn? Real listening changes the next thing I say. If my response was already loaded while you were speaking, I may have heard the words without allowing the conversation to affect me.

Presence

Am I actually here? Presence has become harder in an environment built around interruptions. Microsoft research has described a workday punctuated by constant meetings, emails and pings. Being physically present while mentally distributed across five channels is now completely normal. Conscious communication asks us to notice the cost of that.

Authenticity and intention

What am I trying to create through this conversation? This is not about saying every thought in the name of authenticity. It is about being honest about our purpose. Am I trying to understand, control, impress, avoid, repair, sell, support or decide? Intention shapes tone long before we notice it.

Curiosity

Am I open to learning something new from this person and this moment? Curiosity may be my favourite part of the model because it keeps communication alive. The moment I decide I already know what you think, why you did it and what you are going to say next, the conversation begins to close.

Conscious communication is not about getting every conversation right. It is about becoming more awake inside the conversation.

This is the bridge between the academic research and the practical work I now do. My Masters explored co-presence, reciprocity, care, connection and the responsibility of carrying knowledge. Conscious Communication gives people a simple way to bring those ideas into everyday interactions.

You do not need to be on a stage. You just need another human being in front of you.



"For authenticity, we've outsourced the workshop to the chatbot."

FINAL CHAPTER

So Where Do We Start to Bridge the Gap?

This is the point where books about communication can become slightly annoying.

We diagnose a huge cultural problem, mention AI, attention, leadership and trust, then finish with a list of twelve things you should start doing before breakfast on Monday.

I do not think we need more pressure. I think we need more deliberate practice.

If The Communication Gap has been created over time by the way we work, meet, message, sell, teach and lead, then we bridge it the same way: through small changes in the environments where communication actually happens.

So where would I start?

1. Make time for conversations that are not about what we do, but why we do it

Most workplace conversation is understandably operational. We talk about targets, deliverables, projects, deadlines and performance. But if that is all we talk about, teams can know exactly what everyone does and still know very little about what matters to them.

Create facilitated conversations where the purpose is not to get through an agenda. Ask people why they chose this work. What part of

the job makes them feel useful? What do they wish customers understood? What experience shaped the way they lead? What are they proud of that never appears in a KPI?

This is not forced vulnerability. It is context. And context makes collaboration easier because people stop being job titles and become people again.

2. Put conversation back into learning

If the subject is communication, leadership, culture, trust, sales or customer experience, do not teach it entirely through information.

Let people practise. Give them a question. Put them in pairs. Let them tell a story. Let them listen without interrupting. Let them notice what happened in their body when they were not allowed to jump in with advice. Let them try the difficult opening sentence out loud before they need it in real life.

The learning should model the thing we are asking people to do.

3. Replace some updates with meaning

Every meeting does not need to become a group therapy session. But most meetings can afford one better question.

Instead of only ‘What happened?’, ask ‘What surprised us?’ Instead of only ‘What is the status?’, ask ‘What is making this harder than it needs to be?’ Instead of ‘Any questions?’, ask ‘What are we assuming that might not be true?’

Curiosity changes the quality of the room.

4. Teach people to tell useful stories

Storytelling at work does not mean turning every update into a TED Talk. It means helping people recognise where a human example will make an idea easier to understand.

Ask: who experienced this? What changed? What did we learn? What was at stake? What can somebody else do differently because of it?

A useful story should carry the information, not compete with it.

5. Practise listening where nothing needs to be fixed

One of the simplest facilitated exercises I use is to create a conversation where the listener has one job: stay curious. No solution. No competing story. No 'that happened to me too'. Just questions that help the other person think.

For many people, it is surprisingly difficult. Which is exactly why it is useful.

6. Design communication for the person receiving it

Before an important presentation, email, change announcement or sales conversation, stop asking only 'What do we need to tell them?' Ask 'What do they already know? What might they be feeling? What will they need context for? Where could they misunderstand us? What would make this relevant?'

That is not manipulation. It is manaakitanga in practice: showing care, respect, generosity and consideration for the person in front of us, and treating their experience as something worthy of care.

7. Create fewer places to hide

Not every message needs a meeting, and not every conversation should be forced face-to-face. But organisations can become so efficient at asynchronous communication that people slowly lose confidence in synchronous communication.

Give people safe, regular opportunities to speak without a script. Let them explain an idea in two minutes. Ask a question in a room. practise a sales opening. lead a short discussion. tell a customer story. Confidence is not created by reading about communication. It grows through repeated experience.

8. Decide where AI helps and where the human needs to stay in the loop

Use AI to reduce the coordination tax. Summarise, organise, draft, analyse and remove unnecessary admin. But be thoughtful about the moments you do not want to outsource.

The difficult feedback. The apology. The story that only you can tell. The conversation where somebody needs to feel that you are with them, rather than receiving an efficient answer from you.

The question is not ‘Should we use AI for communication?’ We already are. The better question is ‘Which parts of communication become more valuable precisely because a human chose to show up?’

9. Measure the gap

Before you launch another training programme, find out where your people are actually getting stuck.

Are they struggling with clarity? Confidence? difficult conversations? listening? presenting? sales conversations? speaking up? phone confidence? telling stories? communicating online?

That is why I have started building communication quizzes and diagnostics into my work. A useful diagnostic gives people language for what they are experiencing, and it gives L&D a much better starting point than assuming everybody needs the same intervention.

You can begin with my Communication Clarity Quiz at moniquebradley.tv/communication-clarity.

10. Facilitate the conversations you want your culture to become capable of having

This may be the biggest one.

Culture is not what sits on the wall. It is what people become able to say to one another.

If you want a culture of curiosity, create conversations where curiosity is practised. If you want trust, design moments where people can discover each other beyond roles. If you want better sales conversations, rehearse real sales conversations. If you want leaders who communicate with clarity, give them a place to work on the message before the stakes are high.

Facilitation matters because a good facilitator does more than keep time. They notice the room. They ask the question underneath the first answer. They create enough safety for honesty without allowing the conversation to drift into avoidance.

We bridge the communication gap by creating more places where people can practise being human with each other.

Where I can help

If you are reading this because you are responsible for learning, culture, leadership, sales or capability in your organisation, there are three useful places to begin.

First, take the Communication Clarity Quiz and share it with your team. Use the result as a conversation starter rather than a label.

Second, bring me in to speak. The Communication Gap keynote is designed to make people notice the way communication has changed and why human communication skills are becoming more valuable as information becomes easier to generate. It is thought-provoking, practical and built to start conversations long after the event.

Third, bring me in to facilitate the work after the keynote. That might mean a Conscious Communication workshop, a storytelling and sales session, a leadership communication workshop, or a facilitated conversation designed around the specific communication challenges inside your organisation.

Because awareness is useful. Practice is what changes behaviour.

Start here: moniquebradley.tv



"The relationship-building part begins on slide ninety-four."

CLOSING

Use Your Voice

I do not think we are going backwards.

I do not think the answer to AI is nostalgia, or that we should throw away Teams, email, chat, automation and every tool that makes modern work possible.

I think the opportunity is more interesting than that.

We can become extraordinarily capable at using technology and extraordinarily intentional about remaining human.

We can use AI to deal with information while getting better at meaning. We can automate the routine without automating care. We can communicate faster without assuming faster is always better. We can teach people how to prompt and also how to ask a question that changes a real conversation.

And perhaps we can stop treating communication as something people should somehow already know how to do.

Communication is ancient, but that does not make it automatic. It is a practice. A relationship. A responsibility.

My Masters research taught me to think about speaking as weaving. Each story, idea, value and person in the room becomes a strand. The strength does not come from any one strand on its own. It comes from what happens when we weave them together.

We are living through an era that can produce more strands than ever before.

More data. More content. More messages. More words.

Our job now is to remember how to weave.

Information tells us something. Communication creates something between us.

And that is why I believe the ability to use our voices with clarity, confidence and humanity will become one of the most valuable capabilities we carry into the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

About Monique Bradley

Monique Bradley is a keynote speaker, communication specialist, storytelling strategist and speaker coach based in Aotearoa New Zealand. She speaks on communication, storytelling, confidence, imposter syndrome and finding your voice, helping people communicate with greater clarity, confidence and impact.

Her career spans live television presenting and producing, public speaking, corporate training, live-streaming, facilitation and communication coaching. Across that work, Monique explores what helps people move beyond simply sharing information to communicating in a way that creates understanding, connection and action.

Monique completed a Master of Creative Practice with First Class Honours. Her research project, Te Ara o Te Harakeke, explored how the relational worldview of te ao Māori contributes to dynamic co-presence in keynote speaking. The research brought together whakapapa, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga, kaitiakitanga and wairuatanga as interconnected strands within a relational approach to speaking.

Today, that research underpins her work on The Communication Gap and Conscious Communication, alongside her keynotes and workshops on confidence, clarity, impact, storytelling and imposter syndrome. Her focus is practical: helping organisations build the human communication capability needed to lead, sell, collaborate and connect in an increasingly AI-enabled world.

Monique works with conferences, leadership teams, sales teams and organisations through keynotes, workshops and facilitated learning experiences.

Website: moniquebradley.tv

Communication Clarity Quiz: moniquebradley.tv/communication-clarity

EVIDENCE BEHIND THE IDEA

Sources and Further Reading

This book is intentionally written as a conversation rather than an academic paper. The ideas, however, are grounded in research, practice and current workforce evidence.

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THE COMMUNICATION GAP

Information tells us something.
Communication creates something between us.

KEYNOTE • WORKSHOPS • FACILITATED CONVERSATIONS

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